

Lincoln Park Neighborhood Plan Advisory Group
Summary Meeting minutes
March 6, 2003

Members present: Bess Corbin, Merion Green, Fran Hawkins, Berneice Howard, Frank Johnson, Linda Martin, Anita Neal Powell, Anita Summerour

Others: Jean Carter, Ronald Carter, Pamela Leach, Anita Neal, John Noland, Bob Riever

Staff: Mayra Bayonet, Randy Clay, Jim Wasilak

Opening Remarks/Administrative Items

Jim Wasilak asked everyone to introduce themselves since there were some new attendees at the meeting. He also noted that East Rockville will be holding a Community Meeting at 7:00 p.m. on March 11 at the Maryvale Elementary School cafeteria. There will be an overall presentation for the audience, along with stations for individuals to discuss the Plan recommendations with members of each subcommittee. He encouraged Lincoln Park members to attend. Berneice Howard asked about a joint meeting, and Jim responded that there is still an opportunity for one to be held. The schedule will be discussed at the end of the meeting.

WINX Property

Jim discussed the WINX property and the land use recommendations in the County's Upper Rock Creek Master Plan. Park and Planning staff had recommended the property for residential use should it be annexed into the City. The County Planning Board has been conducting worksessions on the Plan. The property had been subject to litigation, which was recently settled. Bob Riever, in attendance, now has control of the property.

Mr. Riever explained that there will never be an auto body shop on the property. He also explained the legal situation that has been unresolved for over two years. He noted that he understands that the community desires single-family residential use on the property. He assured the community that the desires of Lincoln Park will be taken into account in whatever he decides to do with the property, but he is constrained by his financial situation. Mr. Riever has developed other properties near residential neighborhoods, always with the support of the community. He understood that this may not be possible in this case, but he also understood the concerns of the community. He noted that he has approval in Montgomery County for an auto storage lot on the property. The property could potentially be used for construction storage because there is no sewer and water service, and there is a lease with the radio station until 2021. Anything that is developed will include the buffer along Ashley Avenue, which is maintained in a conservation easement. Access to the site will be only from Westmore Road. He discussed a self-supporting pole with the radio station, as this would be more attractive.

Mr. Riever would prefer that the property be annexed into Rockville, but with a transitional industrial use with covenants to protect the community. He mentioned another project that he has developed at the corner of Nicholson Lane and Old Georgetown Road. He reiterated that he

is very sympathetic about the appearance of the property. Any lease on the property would require vehicle access to Gude Drive via Dover Road. He added that the terms of the loan on the property require him to develop the property quickly in order to develop an income stream. Fran Hawkins asked if residential development is a possibility. Mr. Riever responded that he has pursued up to 150 units on the site in the past. He expressed that the property may not be appropriate for residential use in a pure planning sense because it is adjacent to the auto repair facilities on Westmore Road. Bess Corbin asked whether the nonresidential use had more to do with adjacent use or the physical layout of the property. Mr. Riever responded that the narrow configuration of the property probably precludes any kind of buffer, and there is the adjacent railroad.

Mr. Riever noted that he has been contacted by several potential users for storage use on the property. Bess asked what the difference was between what he wants and what VOB wanted to do previously. He responded that the VOB proposal was a body shop, while his use is vehicle storage with screening and buffering, with egress limitations. Fran expressed concerns about traffic using North Horners Lane for access, and Mr. Riever said that he could control this through lease restrictions. He also suggested that modifications can be made to Ashley Avenue to control the traffic. Anita Summerour asked how the vehicles would get to the site, especially the auto trailers, since they can come any way they choose. When Bess said she didn't see any difference between the previous proposal and this one, Mr. Riever explained that the difference is that the storage use is a temporary one because a different use is possible if the property is annexed into Rockville.

Mr. Riever reiterated that he is coming before the neighborhood to explain the situation, and to support buffers and changed traffic patterns. Berneice Howard remained concerned about traffic to the site. Some vehicles may come from Gude Drive, while others may come from Rockville Pike. Anita stated that the industrial density in the neighborhood will increase with this proposal. Fran expressed that the community will not be happy to hear about the plans. Mr. Riever stated that the community should consider what industrial use would be appropriate on the site that would have minimal impact. Bess asked about security on the site, and he explained that this could be accomplished over the Internet, as this would be just for inventory storage. He stated that he didn't think that the trailers would be dropping off cars on the site, but he was not sure. This could be written into the lease for the site. Linda Martin expressed concerns about unfamiliar drivers becoming lost in the neighborhood, impacting residential streets. Mr. Riever felt that only employees would be going to and from the site. He added that the ultimate use might be one that appears residential but is industrial or commercial when the property would be annexed. Jim clarified that the City's Master Plans recommend residential use on the property, and would likely only entertain annexation of the property for residential use. The City does not have to annex the property for an undesirable use. Bess added that this was part of the 1984 Neighborhood Plan, and Fran noted that the new neighborhood plan will include this as well. Jim also added that the City's influence is somewhat limited for the temporary uses that might occur on the property while it is in the County's industrial zone.

Mr. Riever stated that there is a possibility that trees may start to be taken down in 2-3 months. He reiterated that he welcomes the community's input and is committed to developing solutions

for issues. He also suggested that the School Board facilities could potentially move to the WINX property, and an attractive use could be developed on the MCPS property on North Stonestreet Avenue. An audience member asked about whether the houses on North Stonestreet would be demolished, and the Group responded that the redevelopment is for the MCPS property only.

Jim noted that there will be a public hearing on the County's Plan at the County Council in the near future, so there will be an additional opportunity for public input.

Discussion of Framework Document

Jim noted that the document summarizes the decisions that have been made during the Advisory Group discussions. This will be the basis for the Neighborhood Plan, with additional text, maps and graphics to support the recommendations. That document in turn will be recommended for approval to the Planning Commission and adoption by Mayor and Council. Jim suggested reviewing the document by topic area. He pointed out that there is not an overall goal for this Plan, which contrasts with East Rockville. This plan separates the important components of the Plan into goals for each section. Anita Summerour said she felt that the document captures just about everything that the Group had decided. She had a question about the Maryvale Center, and felt that the loitering and public safety problem should be added to that section. Jim responded that this could be included in the text, and added to other sections such as public safety.

Anita Neal Powell asked about the process leading to Mayor and Council consideration. There would be a community meeting in late April or early May, and Jim asked whether the Group wanted the draft available at the meeting. The Group was agreeable to this. Jim clarified the land use recommendations in the Plan for North Stonestreet Avenue in response to Berneice's question. This is for a mix of unit types and incomes, but not apartments, for ownership opportunities. Frank Johnson expressed concerns about the redevelopment of Lincoln Terrace. Jim explained that if there are items in the Framework document that the Group doesn't agree with, this should be discussed before the Community Meeting.

Anita Neal Powell asked how the recommendations would be carried forward if there was not agreement among the Advisory Group members, such as with the Lincoln Terrace redevelopment issue. Jim responded that there is always an opportunity to transmit the document to the Mayor and Council with this lack of agreement noted. However, if the majority of the Group makes the decision, this is what will be included in the draft Plan.

Next Steps

The next meeting is tentatively proposed to be a joint meeting with East Rockville on April 10 at the Lincoln Park Community Center.